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persistent study, and with an eye always open to natural models.

It seems a pity that an artist of such distinct and peculiar genius should be forgotten. It is greatly to be wished that a selection of his best drawings should be published in a form calculated to preserve his memory, especially as it is no longer easy to secure them. Whenever they appear at book sales there is usually a brisk competition for them, but they pass into private collections and are out of the reach of the general. A moderate reproduction of the finest, at a reasonable price, would give pleasure to a great many people and would serve to secure the remembrance of a gifted and excellent man.

#### AN ILL WIND.

IT is an ill wind that blows no one any good, and the present financial depression and consequent stagnation in the picture market ought not to be considered an unmitigated evil by the artists, since it has burst a bubble whose iridescent hues have for a long time deceived many people into becoming patrons of foreign art work, when otherwise they would have been interested in the art of their own country. The first steps in the growth of art are always in the line of portraiture, and there is no thought of any future realization of the money invested; but later on, when a taste for other kinds of art work is being developed, there is a natural desire that the pictures purchased shall have a market value that can be realized at any time; and this feeling has been adroitly worked upon by our foreign dealers, whose assertions have been implicitly believed, that their pictures were even better investments than gold or diamonds, as at any time they could be sold either here or in Europe for a large advance on their cost, and for a number of years their words have been borne out by facts. Like some fancy stocks, when many want to buy and few to sell, the prices advanced with every sale, and it appeared as if there were to be no end to the boom. But the end came the moment that the buyers were few and the sellers many, a condition due partly to the hard times, and partly to the fact that the high prices were of an unnatural, hot-house growth, and also that confidence in the genuineness of foreign pictures has been much shaken by the exposures of the past year; and it is now manifest, by the low prices obtained at recent sales, that foreign pictures, purchased at high prices from New York dealers, are by no means the safe and productive investments they have long been supposed to be. A reaction is now setting in, and many of our hitherto exclusively foreign art collectors declare, that they will buy no more foreign pictures, but will examine into the claims of American art work, and give encouragement to those of our artists who in their opinions deserve it, and who have been hitherto thoughtlessly ignored. That is all that any of us ought to desire, and it is the only course that will result in the building up of a school of art that will be an honor to the country and a credit to those who have thus assisted in its development.

—A.

#### ONE OF OUR JUDGES.

A MOST remarkable book is Mr. Conway's\*, with its three-fold contents—"History of the Woodcutters, Catalogue of Woodcuts, List of Books Containing Woodcuts." With the second and third divisions I do not meddle. They will be very interesting to bibliographers; and, I have no doubt, are not only carefully (that is evident), but accurately done. So far the book is probably a valuable addition to our stock of catalogue knowledge. But of the first part, professing to be history and criticism, something has to be said by a woodcutter.

Strangely inappropriate is the title of the book—"The Woodcutters of the Netherlands"—and also that of the first part—"History of Woodcutters"—since there are no woodcutters visible in the history. Notwithstanding, the table of contents to Part I. contains the following:

*Chapter II.*—The First Louvain Woodcutter, The Utrecht Woodcutter, The Bruges Woodcutter.

*Chapter III.*—The First Gouda Woodcutter, The Second Gouda Woodcutter, The First Antwerp Woodcutter.

*Chapter IV.*—The Haarlem Woodcutter, The Same Workman, or His School, at Antwerp; The Third Delft Woodcutter of This School.

*Chapter VI.*—The First Zwolle Woodcutter, The Second Zwolle Woodcutter.

*Chapter VII.*—The Second Delft Woodcutter and His School.

*Chapter VIII.*—The Brussels Woodcutter, The Second Louvain Woodcutter, The Third Louvain Woodcutter.

*Chapter IX.*—The Third Gouda Woodcutter, The Fourth Gouda Woodcutter, The First Leyden Woodcutter, The Second Leyden Woodcutter, The First Schoonhoven Woodcutter, The Second Schoonhoven Woodcutter.

*Chapter X.*—The Second Antwerp Woodcutter, The Third Antwerp Woodcutter.

And in an *Appendix*—Arend de Keyser's Woodcutter.

After such an array, all between 1475 and 1500, has not the reader a right to look for something about these twenty-three men? Something personal, even; that at least we may know the name of one, or the monogram of another. Our author has not a single word to say of one of them. They are all men of buckram. What he means by this list is simply that he will speak of *the cuts* printed at Louvain, Bruges, Antwerp, etc., etc., and he chooses, without any ground for doing so, to attribute the work printed in each place to a separate woodcutter.

It is curious that a book (or only the most prominent and important part of a book) should contain nothing of its own "contents"; but, beyond noting the curiosity, I may let that go. My business is with what the book really does contain, which is, instead of any history of woodcutters, very much rambling criticism of woodcuts, judged of in a most remarkable and not altogether unusual manner.

To begin: Mr. Conway (plainly a poor follower of Mr. Ruskin—his speech bewrayeth him) informs us that "the

\*The Woodcutter of the Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century; by William Martin Conway. England: the Cambridge University Press.

system of working in pure outline, which the fathers of woodcutting had adopted, was a false one, because it could only be brought to perfection by great labor and care entirely disproportionate to the result" (p. 26).

Shade of the first father of woodcutting! What could you have found easier or less laborious than outline? By the fathers of woodcutting Mr. Conway means the early engravers; and, false or not the system of outline, he should have fathered it on the early draftsmen, since it is difficult to see how, when an outline drawing on a board was given to the cutter, he could possibly adopt any other system.

Then our critic proceeds to point out how in a certain cut "the lines do not bulge or bend, but where the *cutter* intended them to lie there they are set" (p. 30). But it was the draftsman who intended where they should lie, and the *cutter* only left them standing where they were set.

Another as innocent *cutter* is noted as "an unpractised hand," what so "marks" him being that "all the figures in his cut are the wrong way round, left-handed, their swords girt on the wrong side, and so forth" (p. 29). Indeed, sir, 'twas the *draftsman* was left-handed, and not the *cutter*.

A certain Gouda workman (that is to say, his cut was printed at Gouda, but no one knows where or by whom engraved) is "by no means without power," but is "held in by the materials with which he had to deal, and which he cannot reduce to subjection to his will. He is like a stammerer carried away by enthusiasm. . . . Now and then he bursts through his bonds and attains a real success." He had to cut some lines ready drawn for him "to show the effect of wind; a wind must blow something; here comes the difficulty. . . . You cannot get a wind-rent cloud to stand still. . . . In fact it has taken generations of hard-working men to learn how to draw clouds at all. So that our poor *woodcutter* [who had not to draw at all] was here fairly at his wits' end" (pp. 37, 38). All this enthusiastic stammering about the cutting of a few lines, with no materials but the drawing of the lines laid upon the wood and a small knife wherewith to cut them! Mr. Conway must have been mistaking this old knife-user for the wonderful engraver of the present Century, who goes out into the open air to work directly from Nature.

Be good enough to notice that nothing I have quoted can in any sense be applicable to the *cutter*!

I cannot refrain from yet another passage. It concerns the Haarlem woodcutter who had a school. If we could but learn who he was! Mr. Conway supposes him to have done a cut in which the water is "really water; it splashes about the feet of the horses," and is otherwise active. But our Haarlem *cutter's* work, in spite of this, is "most noticeable" for "the weakness of his lines. . . . He very seldom succeeds in cutting his edges clearly and firmly," etc.

"On the other hand, when spaces of white have to be dealt with, he is quite at home. . . . He is always able to outline a white mass correctly. The principal side of any of his black spaces is, in general, correctly drawn; but he cannot cut the other side clean—he cannot finish it as a line. He seems to have had a great facility in working, and

to have been eager besides, but he was fettered by the traditions of the school. He was forced always to cut in lines, and yet lines were the very things in which he was weakest. Thus from time to time he made a very bad block, and he never produced work of the first order. He was certainly the best woodcutter in his country at the time, but he fails from what he might have been, as many another has failed, by the throttling bonds of custom forcing him to do what even in doing he shows, consciously or unconsciously, to be wrong. When he has to cut clouds, or hair, or flames, or flowers, he lets his hand fly, and shows you how pleased he is to get a chance of digging into his block and thinking only of the piece he is cutting out—not of what he leaves standing" (pp. 63, 64).

To enable my readers the better to judge of the worth of this criticism, let me very briefly explain what was the process of woodcutting in those days—1475 to 1500. Evidence we have none of the work of that time being drawn and cut by the same man. It is quite an assumption on Mr. Conway's part, and yet that only could partially excuse his comments. The subject of a wood-cut was drawn in clear, black lines on a plank of soft wood. The only tools used were a knife, to outline every drawn line or to cut away small interstices, and a gouge and mallet, to clear away the large unoccupied spaces. Now, what is the meaning of being "quite at home when spaces of white have to be dealt with?" How shall one "outline a white mass?" And what can our critic understand by his "black spaces in general correctly drawn, but he cannot cut the other side clean—he cannot finish it as a line"? How shall a white mass be outlined with a knife? And what is the "other side" of a black space, and how shall a black space be finished as a line? Lastly, what are we expected to learn from our imaginary cutter's pleasure when he gets "a chance of digging into his block and thinking only of the piece he is cutting out?" Mr. Conway has read Ruskin, who wrote something of the sort—not as absurdly—of work to be done with a graver (quite another process), and this is how he applies his learning. Imagine a man before a plank, with a penknife (no other tool) in his hand, "bursting through his bonds," the "throttling bonds of custom," and letting "his hand fly" to the diggins! There is Mr. Conway's Haarlem woodcutter! Immediately beyond my quotation the pseudo-Ruskin stands confessed. "His shade hatchings usually present considerable variety. . . . short hatchings of all forms—one is never like its neighbor; the same is the case with jagged-edged lines." And "the attitudes of the figures are always unstrained." Is it not evident that the cut must have been by the Haarlem woodcutter, or the same workman, or his school?

So much for the critic! The historian's qualification may be shown in a single sample.

"We know that this printer employed one man, and possibly more than one, as founder of types; and it is not at all unlikely that he would retain for the work of his press one or more woodcutters. On the lookout for a good workman, he immediately engaged the Haarlem artist as soon as his occupation came to an end" (p. 74).

Known that he employed a type founder, he may have looked out for a wood-cutter; argal, the imaginary Haarlem woodcutter is the man. Q. E. D.

This book has the *imprimatur* of England's University of Cambridge. So histories and art criticisms are written. Of such writers are the judges of engraving.

—W. J. LINTON.

#### A LETTER FROM ITALY.

**B**OLOGNA is the Porkopolis of Europe, and its sausages, redolant of garlic, are sent to all parts of the world to tickle the palates of the unprejudiced in smells. There are, no doubt, to-day, as there always have been, many good Bolognians who take more pride in their hogs than in their Saint Cecilia, and believe that their city must rest its unique reputation and chances of wealth upon the former rather than upon the latter possession. But the Bolognians who think so are unlettered and untraveled, and have never heard of the city in a new and distant country that arrogates to itself the proud pre-eminence of being *the* Porkopolis of the world, whose various preparations of the succulent pig far exceed in number and quality those of Bologna, even in her palmiest days, and whose citizens are reputed to rate the value of such raw materials and the facility with which they can be converted into wealth, as highly as do the Bolognians. If so, let the example of Bologna be set before their eyes.

More than three centuries ago, the good dame Elena, of the Bentivoglio family, ordered a picture from the painter Raphael, at that time the most famous artist in Rome. The subject is Saint Cecilia, who, listening to the divine music of a choir of angels, casts away her own instruments and turns her enraptured face heavenwards. Every traveler knows the picture, as a pilgrimage to Bologna simply to see this masterpiece is both a rigorous duty and a great pleasure.

Dame Elena, not being rich in gold, was forced to pay the painter partly with food and clothing as well as money. The picture was completed in the year 1516, only four years before the artist's death, and was placed in a church, where every one could freely visit it.

Churches in those days were not merely places of worship, but were also museums in which pious souls emulated each other in displaying whatever was beautiful or curious, and thus dedicating it to the glory of God and the blessed Virgin. The good dame died shortly afterwards, but the money she spent in securing this masterpiece to Bologna soon bore its abundant fruits, as the young artists were incited to follow in the footsteps of the master whose best work was constantly before them.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the great painters of the Roman and Venetian schools were dead, and Italian Art seemed to have died with them.

In the midst of this general stagnation, the school of Bologna began to attract attention, and the pictures of the Carracci, Domenichino, Guido, Albano and Guercino, and their followers, were in great demand, and brought both wealth and renown to the artists and their native city. Although these Bolognians were, in the commencement of their careers, imitators of Raphael, they soon developed

into a new school of their own, whilst retaining in their work the ideal beauty that was characteristic of Raphael. Thus the small outlay of dame Elena was a good investment from a financial point of view, as it brought thousands of visitors to the city; for these pilgrims who came from far and near to pay their tribute of admiration to this miracle of art, do not journey like the pilgrims of old with shell and staff, trusting with simple faith to Providence for food and shelter; they have a prosperous, well-fed appearance, and are accompanied by their families, and the contents of their well-lined purses enrich the hotel-keepers, hack-drivers, guides and tradespeople who cater to their wants. These visitors are attracted to the city by its art treasures, and chiefly by the great work of Raphael, and not by the shining semi-circular tin boxes that fill the shop windows and once gave to Bologna its proud title of Porkopolis.

This painting, which is only a combination by cunning hands of raw materials, such as wood and pigments, which cost less than five dollars, has become the crowning glory of the city, while the once esteemed sausage has fallen into disrepute, to the great disgust of honest Signor Giovanni and his fellow raisers of pork.

"Corpo di Bacco and Sangue di San Pietro!" says he, mixing up heathen and Christian divinities in his rage, "to think that this Raphael, coming from the little village of Urbino, with his five dollars worth of wood and paint, trying to supersede us honest, hard-working natives of Bologna, who have raised thousands of pigs, each one of which consumed six times the value of raw material that he used in his picture. It is the production and consumption of raw materials that gave us our wealth and renown, so let us keep out such beggarly strangers as this Raphael, and our old industries will again resume their importance and Pork will once more be king."

My American reader, and readers in all countries which endeavor to prevent the introduction of Works of Art by placing a heavy import duty on them, remember that a Work of Art has a money value which increases with time; the presence of good Works of Art creates a public taste for art, and it behooves a nation caring for the education of its citizens to encourage in every way the production and introduction of the best existing art works.

Raw materials are good things, and all honor to the men who produce them; but an equal if not greater honor should be given to the man who is able to form from them an object of a much larger value. Nations that are old in knowledge and wisdom, appreciate the worth of great Works of Art; and Italy, though teeming with Art Treasures and staggering under heavy taxes, retains as an organic law, that no masterpiece in private hands shall leave the country without the permission of the Government, which reserves the right to purchase it at the price offered. So much from the money point of view; but there is such a thing as reciprocal courtesy, which should mark the intercourse of individuals and nations. The great public and private collections, and the art schools of such art centres as Rome, Paris and Munich, are generously thrown open to the American students, and they are allowed to compete for